



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

DOI
DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

THREE WOMEN INDICTED FOR CONSPIRING WITH NYC
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFFICIAL
TO OBTAIN ADOPTION SUBSIDY PAYMENTS

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the Indictment of BRENDA TOWE, TAMMY MOORE, and OLETHA RHODES, for conspiring to steal tens of thousands of dollars in public funds destined for needy children.

According to the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court, and other court documents previously filed in a related case:

The New York City Administration for Children's Services ("ACS") is a New York City agency responsible for, among other things, providing services to needy children and their families. Among other duties, ACS administers payments from New York City to parents who adopt needy children from New York City's foster care system. In particular, ACS administers approximately \$32 million in adoption subsidy payments each month. Adoption subsidies are monthly payments mandated by New York State law for the care, maintenance, and medical needs of a child who fits the definition of handicapped or hard-to-place.

Nigel Osarenkhoe was Supervisor of Adoptions within ACS's Payment Services Department and was also a member of ACS's Quality Assurance Unit. As a consequence, Osarenkhoe had access to and knowledge of the computer systems involved in the processing of adoption subsidy payments at ACS. The Indictment unsealed today charges that BRENDA TOWE, TAMMY MOORE, and OLETHA RHODES conspired with Osarenkhoe to obtain adoption subsidy

payments they were not entitled to. Osarenkhoe was able to manipulate the computer systems controlling adoption subsidy payments at ACS to have the fraudulent payments mailed to them. Thus, from early 2007 through late 2008, TOWE received approximately \$54,972.74 in fraudulent adoption subsidy payments; MOORE received approximately \$66,050.98; and RHODES received approximately \$33,365.88.

The Indictment charges TOWE, 47, of Brooklyn, New York, MOORE, 38, of Queens, New York, and RHODES, 62, of Queens, New York, with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. If convicted, each faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, as well as a maximum fine of the greater of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. TOWE, MOORE, and RHODES surrendered on the charges earlier this morning and have been released on bail. Their case has been assigned to the United States District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III. (Osarenkhoe pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud ACS on January 20, 2009, before the Honorable BARBARA S. JONES, and is scheduled to be sentenced on August 6, 2009, at 11:00 a.m. before Judge JONES.)

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys DANIEL L. STEIN and WILLIAM J. HARRINGTON are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment against TOWE, MOORE, and RHODES are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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